

MODULAR RACK CONVERSION APPARATUS AND METHOD

Cross-Reference To Related Applications

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This is a continuation of United States Patent Application Serial Number 10/155,851 filed on May 24, 2002, ^{now U.S. Patent No. 6,739,463} which claims priority to United States Provisional Patent Application Serial Number 60/293,954 filed on May 25, 2001 and United States Provisional Patent Application Serial Number 60/378,773 filed on May 8, 2002 having the same title. Priority is hereby claimed to these earlier-filed patent applications, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to racks, and more particularly to adjustable racks and rack systems for storing and displaying merchandise and other items, methods of assembling such racks and rack systems, and components of such racks and rack systems.

Background

Conventional warehouse-type racks are increasingly used in applications for which they were not initially designed. Previously, such racks were commonly employed in storage and warehouse facilities to store and organize products in bulk form. However, for purposes of cost-savings and with the increased popularity of warehouse-type stores, many users now employ warehouse-type racks in retail establishments. Although such racks are strong, durable, and are capable of storing large quantities of product, a number of drawbacks exist in using warehouse-type racks to display and store merchandise (as well as for other purposes).

By way of example only, conventional warehouse-type racks are significantly limited in their adjustability -- and hence the different shelving configurations possible -- due to the relatively large sizes of the rack components. In many warehouse-type racks, stretchers extend laterally and in front-rear directions in order to connect vertically-extending uprights. Such uprights typically have a limited number locations to which the stretchers can be connected.